



## Citizen Corps Program Overview

*After September 11, 2001, America witnessed a wellspring of selflessness and heroism. People in every corner of the country asked, "What can I do?" and "How can I help?" Citizen Corps was created to help everyone in America answer these questions by promoting an understanding of our personal responsibilities for preparedness and by providing training and volunteer service opportunities to foster citizen participation to help make our communities and our nation safer.*

Coordinated nationally by the Department of Homeland Security, Citizen Corps integrates programs and activities that engage everyone in *hometown security*. Led by the local Citizen Corps Council, Citizen Corps implementation is tailored to the community and focuses on community-specific public education and outreach, training, and volunteer opportunities. Citizen Corps Programs include five federal program partners, Citizen Corps affiliate programs, and other organizations and activities that promote the mission.



The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program** educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community. The program is administered by DHS.



The **Fire Corps Program** promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels: volunteer, combination, and career. Citizen advocates can assist local fire departments in a range of activities including fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support. Fire Corps provides resources to assist fire and rescue departments in creating opportunities for citizen advocates and promotes citizen participation. Fire Corps is funded through DHS and is managed and implemented through a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.



The **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program** strengthens communities by helping medical, public health and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need. MRC volunteers work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs and also supplement existing community public health initiatives, such as outreach and prevention, immunization programs, blood drives, case management, care planning, and other efforts. The MRC program is administered by HHS.



The new **Neighborhood Watch Program** incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission, while also serving as a way to bring residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and emergency response training. Funded by DOJ, Neighborhood Watch is administered by the National Sheriffs' Association.



**Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)** works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. Funded by DOJ, VIPS is managed and implemented by International Association of Chiefs of Police.

In Nebraska the Citizen Corps program is coordinated by the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission to promote volunteer service promoting the **Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs** to expand the resources and materials available to states and local communities to implement the Citizen Corps mission; and other awareness and preparedness resources, such as **Ready.gov**, to help everyone in America **prepare, train, and volunteer** for hometown security.

To learn more about the Citizen Corps programs and partners, for information on how to be better prepared, and to find the Council nearest you, visit [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov). For Nebraska information contact Susan Burton 402-471-6226 or [susan.burton@hhss.ne.gov](mailto:susan.burton@hhss.ne.gov) or Leo Larkin at 402-471-7424 [leo.larkin@nema.ne.gov](mailto:leo.larkin@nema.ne.gov).